Shri Singh represented the State of Haryana in this House from April, 1996 to April, 2002

A widely travelled person, Shri Singh attended the World Assembly for Peace in East Berlin in the year 1969.

In the passing away of Shri Lachhman Singh, the country has lost a noted social worker and an able administrator.

We deeply mourn the passing away of Shri Lachhman Singh.

I request Members of the House to rise in their places and observe silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.

(Hon. Members then stood in silence for one minute)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Secretary-General will convey to the members of the bereaved family our deep sense of sorrow and sympathy.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Damage to Kirandul-Visakhapatnam rail track due to overloading

*341.SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the 472 kilometres long rail track from Kirandul to Visakhapatnam is in danger of heavy damage due to overloading of iron ores in goods trains;

(b) whether some trains were recently cancelled due to damage to the tracks;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the amount lost due to such cancellation;

(e) the reasons for not taking prompt action;

(f) whether the geologists have also expressed fear about this track;

(g) if so, Government's response thereto; and

(h) the steps being taken by Government to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU): (a) to (h) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) to (e) Do not arise.

(f) No, Sir.

(g) Does not arise.

(h) Regular inspections are carried out at various levels and action taken as per the requirement.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Sir, the Visakhapatnam-Kirandul line has a heavy and busy traffic. We are transporting iron-ores through this track, and there are also a lot of tunnels on this track. On this 472 kms. long stretch, often, trains are either cancelled or diverted, and the people complain that there is a lot of damage to their produce as a result of this. Sir, in addition to a lot of time that is wasted in this process, the Railways are also incurring lot of losses by virtue of cancellation of trains. I would like to know what steps are being contemplated by Railways to overcome this problem.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, I quite agree with the hon. Member when he says that it is one of the very important routes. In the Indian Railways, this is the most prestigious route, in the sense that it is an engineering marvel, the first of its kind in India. In fact, this route has been constructed on a very tough terrain. As the hon. Member has said, it has got 58 tunnels. It passes through very deep gorges through viaducts. Not only that, about 1268bridges also have been built and the highest station located at about 997 metres, above MSLthat is, about 3000 feet high above the sea level. It would mean that this is a route that has been designed to transport iron ore to the Visakhapatnam Port as well as the steel plant there. It has been constructed there with the purpose of serving the Visakhapatnam port and the steel plant.

Sir, this route covers three States, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, and Visakhapatnam. It is a fact that today we earn about Rs. 2.62 crores per day on an average on account of freight loading. I also agree with the

hon. Member that many a time, because of the landslides and boulder falls on account of incessant rains, traffic is stopped. We have experienced even 1960 mm of rainfall in a year, from June to November. In fact, we got it inspected by scientists, including geologists from the Central Mining Research Institute, Nagpur to see whether anything could be done on that route. After inspection, they have said that the soil is hard enough and the boulder falls and landslides are only on account of incessant rains. So what we have done now is in the pre-monsoon season, we have got the entire stretch inspected and all precautionary steps heve been taken.

Sir, I accept his view that such landslides and boulder falls occurring periodically stop trains, both freight as well as passenger trains. But we are not running more passenger trains. There is only one pair of passenger trains that runs on that route; one is from Visakhapatnam to Kirandul and the other one is the other way round. But we are running about 15 pairs of freight trains to transport iron ore. We shall take real note of this situation and try to minimise this kind of blockades that are occurring on account of natural disasters.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Sir, I am thankful to the hon. Minister for accepting the suggestions. Visakhapatnam is a fast-growing city. We have the Gangavaram Port coming up there as we feel that it is the highest revenue-generating division. Also, there is a long-pending demand from that area for doubling the track. That is one thing.

The other one is, iron ore transportation is also being done from Hospet to Chennai. There is heavy traffic on that route as well and often, the track is damaged. What are the steps being contemplated by the Minister regarding that track? What is being done about the doubling of Visakhapatnam-Kirandul route? That is a long-pending demand.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, there are two things. One is about the doubling of Kirandul-Visakhapatnam route. As of now, we have not conducted any survey for doubling. However, we will take this into consideration. No survey has been made so far, nor has any request been made formally. However, taking into account the fact that it is already a very high-paying route, we would consider whether there is the necessity to increase the capacity. We shall examine this and will let the hon. Member know.

Sir, as for the other point, about the Hospet route, right now, we do not know what exactly lies on the field. In fact, I will get back to the hon.

Member and get the details about that Hospet route and furnish to the Hon'ble Member.

श्री प्यारे लाल खंडेलवाल: माननीय सभापति जी, यह बात सही है कि किरुण्डल से विशाखापट्टनम की रेल लाइन लौह अयस्क ढोने के लिए बनाई गई थी क्योंकि उधर लौह अयस्क बहुत होता है। यह रेल लाइन जापान के सहयोग से बनी है। सभापति जी, जैसा कि अभी मंत्री जी ने कहा कि इस रेल लाइन पर 15 मालगाड़ियां और एक पैसेंजर गाड़ी चलती है, विशाखापट्टनम से किरुण्डल के रूट पर कई महत्वपूर्ण कस्बे और शहर इस रेल लाइन पर पड़ते हैं जिस में जगदलपुर भी आता है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या इस रेल लाइन पर पैसेंजर गाड़ी, जो केवल एक चलाई जाती है, वहां सवारी गाड़ियां और बढ़ाई जाएगी? यह जो पैसेंजर गाड़ी चलती है, वह भी कई बार बिना सूचना के रद्द कर दी जाती है। इसके कारण यात्रियों को बड़ी कठिनाई होती है। यह गाड़ी बार-बार रद्द न हो, और वह नियमित चले तथा क्या एक दूसरी सवारी गाड़ी और चलाई जाएगी, मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं।

SHRI R. VELU: Well, Sir, this has been primarily constructed for the iron ore transportation. But due to popular demand of people in that area, we introduced one pair of passenger trains. Occupancy-wise, as of now, one pair of trains is justified. We will take into account the request and see to it. We have no objection to introduce one more pair of train, but occupancy should be there and people should be able to utilise it.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. From the answer we are able to see that there is no heavy damage, as asked for by our friend. But he has been very considerate in other respects. Leave apart the sector, namely, Kirandul to Visakhapatnam, there may be umpteen number of other stretches where overloading and over-utilisation of railway tracks could have been there. It is reported in several newspapers that overloading and over-utilisation of tracks are there. I would like to ask the hon. Minister: Are such tracks in existence in India? If so, what is the action taken with particular reference to Tamil Nadu? Has he been so considerate to Tamil Nadu as he has been showing to Andhra Pradesh?

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, the hon. Member's question is in two parts. One is overloading and another is over-utilisation. More than 100 per cent utilisation of a section means over-utilisation. You may find many routes in Tamil Nadu which have been over-exploited or over utilised. Well, for that we are doubling or a new line is constructed as an alternative route to the existing line. So far as overloading is concerned, in India, for the

first time, we have now increased the load carrying capacity plus 8 tonnes plus 2 tonnes tolerance. For example, the carrying capacity is given 58 tonnes. The permissible carrying capacity will be 8 tonnes plus 2 tonnes, that is, 68 tonnes. That is permissible carrying capacity. Loading which is going beyond this permissible limit accounts for overloading. What are we doing for that? The hon. Minister, Shri Laluji, last year undertook a surprised inspection. The State Minister, Shri Rathwaji, and myself also conducted some inspections to check the overloading. How does overloading happen? It is mostly on loose and bulk commodities, for example, coal. For that, we are now installing weighing machines—in-motion weighing machines as well as static weighing machines. In the originating point itself, we weigh the rakes and see that no overloading takes place. If it happens in the mid way, for that also we have in-motion weighing machines to check it. In order to check it effectively, we have introduced a punitive clause, saying that if you overload, it will attract three times the normal high-class rate which means it is very punitive in nature. That is how we are preventing overloading in Indian Railways. In fact, in Tamil Nadu, during checking we found only marginal increase by way of overloading, and we found that not much is there in that sense.

Threat from Atmospheric Brown Cloud

*342. DR. NARAYAN SINGH MANAKLAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Atmospheric Brown Cloud (ABC), a terminology generally used for the enormous blanket of pollution comprising ash, acids, etc., reduces the chances of monsoon rains substantially in the sub-continent thereby causing potential threat to the agricultural harvests;

(b) if so, the measures taken/proposed to be taken by Government to tackle the threat;

(c) whether any study to assess its impact on our country has been carried out;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?